

SEP
20

September 20, 2026

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Outside the Father's House

Day One: The Son Who Never Left

TEXT Luke 15:25–32

ASK Have I begun keeping score with God — serving out of obligation instead of love?

✧ One son became lost by leaving home; the other became lost while staying in it — and the Father comes out for both.

1

Celebrate the Homecoming — but See the Faithful Too

Heaven throws a party when the lost are found, and so should we. But quiet, steady faithfulness deserves to be seen too.

Luke 15:10, ESV  There is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

1 Corinthians 4:2, ESV  It is required of stewards that they be found faithful.



REMEMBER

God sees the dramatic testimony and the obedience no one ever puts on a platform.

2

A Story About Two Lost Sons

One son got lost by leaving home; the other got lost while staying in it. The heart can wander long before the body does.

**Luke 15:1–2,
ESV**



The tax collectors and sinners drew near to hear Jesus, and the Pharisees grumbled that He received sinners and ate with them.

**Luke 15:28,
ESV**



But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him.



REMEMBER

You can stay on the property, keep every rule, and still let distance grow inside your heart.

3

When Faithfulness Starts Keeping Score

Years of service can quietly become evidence in a case we build in our hearts — love slips into obligation, gratitude into expectation.

**Luke 15:29,
ESV**



"Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command."

**Romans 11:35,
ESV**



Who has given a gift to God that he might be repaid?



REMEMBER

God owes us nothing, yet in Christ He has freely given us everything we could never earn.

4

Obedience Flows From Love, Not For It

The danger of knowing God a long time is trading the wonder of being His child for mere familiarity. We obey because we are loved — not to earn love.

John 14:15,
ESV



If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

2 Corinthians
5:14, ESV



For the love of Christ controls us.

1 John 4:19,
ESV



We love because he first loved us.

**REMEMBER**

Faithfulness makes a terrible substitute for actually knowing Him.

5

The Father Comes Outside Too

He ran down the road for the prodigal — and He left the celebration to plead with the son standing just outside. Different kinds of lostness, the same pursuing Father.

Luke 15:20,
ESV



While he was still a long way off, his father saw him, felt compassion, ran, and embraced him.

Luke 15:28,
ESV



His father came out and entreated him.

**REMEMBER**

Sometimes the person who most needs to come home is the one who never realized he had wandered.

The Response

There is something beautiful about coming home. There is also something beautiful about never leaving. But neither can replace the one thing that matters most — knowing and loving the Father.

- ✓ Ask the Father to search your heart for where love has quietly become obligation.
 - ✓ Name any place you've begun keeping score with God — and let it go.
 - ✓ Stop measuring your story against someone else's.
 - ✓ Come in from outside: enjoy being His child, not just a worker in His field.
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"And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." — John 17:3, ESV

Lord, thank You for welcoming home those who wandered and for sustaining those who remained. Search my heart, and let me simply know You, love You, and enjoy being Your child. In Jesus' name, amen.